As you Independent Customer Advisor, we have provided answered some questions that we think people may ask about the process. This is a mixture of things that people have already asked In August and things we think its likely that people may ask during the consultation period. We will be adding new questions to this list as people ask them during the consultation as well as tweaking them if they are not clear.

**Frequently Asked Questions Factsheet**

# **One Housing Riverside**

We would advise you to also look at our summary of what is proposed in an earlier section to give you some added context. Just click on this link xxxxx to go to it. (As mentioned previously you can also go to your landlords website for more information as well by clicking on this link [www.onehousing.co.uk/together](http://www.onehousing.co.uk/together)

The answers we give below are our best guess based on the information given to us by landlords and our assessment of it. Some answers are easier to give than others and during consultation things often can change as people ask questions and points are clarified. We will update our answers in the light of this. But we would also advise you to get in touch with your landlord if you have any questions after reading our answers and/or attend a drop in meeting if there is one in your area. (You can of course also get in touch with us!)

1. **Will these proposals affect my rent?**

Both landlords have promised in the customer consultation document that rents will not be affected by the merger and there will be no additional charges that will be associated with it.

1. **Will these proposals affect my tenancy rights?**

Both landlords have promised that the proposed merger will have no effect on any customers existing tenancy rights.

1. **How long does the consultation process last?**

It lasts from Monday the 6th of September 2021 to Friday 15th of October

1. **What is the name of the customer consultation document and how do I give feedback?**

It is called ‘Better and Stronger Together: Proposals for the Riverside Group and One Housing Group to come together in a new partnership’ and it’s been delivered to every customer of Riverside and One Housing

You can give feedback by completing the prepaid post card that has been delivered with the document

Alternatively, you can complete the form online or by phone. Click either this link [www.onehousing.co.uk/together](http://www.onehousing.co.uk/together) if you are a One Housing customer or <https://www.riverside.org.uk/about-us/partnerships/riverside-and-one-housing-group/> if you are a Riverside customer, to take you to your landlord’s website for instructions on how to do this.

1. **How do we know that the landlords will keep to the promises that they make in the customer offer?**

The landlords have agreed with tenants’ representatives that they will have a detailed action plan for implementing the promises which includes having detailed targets that they can be measured on. One of the pledges given to customers in the consultation document is specifically about delivering on what they promise.

The chief executive and senior officers of the merged organisation will have to report on progress to both their board of management and to the customer scrutiny panel on their progress on delivering what was agreed and when this has been done.

It’s also important that you give your views on any matters you are asked about during this period to ensure that the specifics of what is done meets the approval of the majority of customers. It’s likely you will be consulted on a number of related items over the next 2 or 3 years.

1. **What about ongoing projects or outstanding commitments?**

As far as we understand it from the documents we have read, the landlords are committed to completing any ongoing initiatives or projects they already have undertaken to do with customers. Similarly, if the landlords have any previous commitments from past mergers or stock transfers these will be honoured as promised. This is an area we have already had some questions on and will be following up with the landlords. When we have done this, we will update this answer.

1. **Will One Housing continue to be my landlord?**

In the long-term no. One Housing will become part of the Riverside group and its management and board structure. The One housing properties will still have their own dedicated management team and staff working locally who will by and large be the same One Housing staff. So, in that sense things may not change much. However, it may not be called One Housing anymore and you may be using services and visiting offices that are renamed as Riverside’s.

In the short term nothing much will change visibly as One Housing will become a subsidiary of the Riverside group and retain its own management and operating structure for at least the first year. This will start to change in year 2 as the local service consultation with customers is completed and any new services are put in place.

This is the situation as we understand it as the moment, but we will update this answer if we need to as the consultation progresses.

 **8. If I’m an existing Riverside customer what will change for me?**

If you are a Riverside customer outside London, it is unlikely you will see much visible change immediately as Riverside will remain your landlord and you will be getting the same services. However, as the local service review process continues in your area you may see changes to way your services are delivered based on the local customer consultation that will be done as part of this. You may also see more or different services being offered as well. In addition to customers being consulted on any significant changes your customer representatives will also be involved in the design and implementation of any new services. Hopefully these will meet with customers approval, but it is important you make your views known when asked.

If you are a Riverside customer in the London area it is again unlikely you will see much change initially but you may see more change in the longer term as you merge with a larger landlord In the London area. Again, customers will be consulted on any proposed service changes and your representatives will also be involved in the detail of these proposals with staff.

**9. If I’m a One Housing Customer what will the new service we get look like? Will it be a local service?**

For the first year One Housing customers won’t notice any significant difference in the service they receive and perhaps for longer than this. During this time there will be significant consultation with customers about the service they get locally and what they want it to look like. So, when service changes are introduced hopefully the service will reflect customers preferences and will be locally focused. Of course, it’s very important that as many one housing customers as possible give their views as part of this process to ensure its what they want to see. Customer representatives will also be working closely with staff on the detail of service development.

Possibly the biggest visible change for One Housing customers could be the adoption of the name Riverside as your Landlord as you access your local housing services. Although this is likely to be a matter for consultation as well.

 **10. What are your views on the consultation process so far and what’s planned?**

When 2 landlords plan to merge the social housing regulator ask both landlords to ensure that all of their affected customer are consulted on these proposals and their views are taken account of when the landlords consider whether to go ahead with their plans to merge. They also recommend that they appoint an independent customer advisor to advise customers and their representatives as well as ensure the consultation process provides customers with accurate consultation materials and maximises the opportunities for customers to feedback on the proposals.

Given this context this is our view of the process currently:

* The initial awareness raising consultation in August was good with a clear document delivered to all customers asking for initial feedback and publicised widely at customer and community event particularly in One Housing stock as these customers will effectively be joining a larger housing group.
* In July 2021 6 tenants for each Landlord were appointed to sit on the Joint Customer Advisory Pane (JCAP) Its role is to oversee the customer consultation process and directly input into the proposals for merger with the staff implementation team and the Landlords board of management based on the customer feedback received and their own views as customer representatives. The panel is entirely made up of and chaired by customers, with officers reporting to it on merger proposals and consultation plans. From our point of view this is very good practice and places customers representatives in a lead role in terms of overseeing the process.
* The landlords have also produced a clear customer consultation document which gives customers clear promises or pledges as to what to expect in terms of the future service they will receive post-merger. The document and the promises were consulted on with customer representatives from JCAP and agreed with them. From our point of view the customer offer document is a good one because it is easy to understand, clear on what is proposed, offers clear promises that the Landlord can be held to account on.
* We also think that the customer consultation process that has been designed is a good one in terms of tenant’s opportunities to feedback, get advice and talk to staff face to face. It also has a larger number of face-to-face meetings in the London area which we think is appropriate given that One Housing tenants in the London area may have more concerns because of the proposed change of landlord.
* Finally, we are working with JCAP and the landlords currently on the detailed process after the consultation process is concluded in terms of recommendations to the landlords boards based on customer feedback on the merger proposals and if the decision is taken to go ahead, how progress will be monitored. Progress here is encouraging and we will report or views in due course.

In summary our view as the Independent Customer Advisor is that the consultation process is robust and inclusive. We will continue to report on this throughout the process and add more information on this website.